

## **CONSECRATION OF BAPTISTERY**

After the consecration of a new church and its altar, the bishop, together with the clergy and deacons carrying crosses and lighted candles, proceeds to consecrate the baptismal font. There exist two versions of the consecration liturgy. In the more widely used ceremony the bishop starts with the Prayer of Thanksgiving, followed by a Pauline epistle (Eph. 2:13, 3:12). The deacons sing the *Trisagion* and a priest says the [Intercession](#) of the Gospel. The [Gospel](#) reading, preceded by Psalm 25:4, is taken from [John](#) 3:1-17, the key verse being Christ's words to Nicodemus: "Unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." The three Great Intercessions follow, namely, peace, the church fathers, and the congregations, after which all recite the creed.

The bishop then reads the baptismal prayer, which has for its theme the regenerative power of baptism. The words of the prayer come from a translation of a Coptic and Arabic manuscript presented by Patriarch CYRIL V (1874-1927) to the bishop of Salisbury, England, in 1898.

The people recite the Lord's Prayer, and the bishop says the absolutions. Afterward he pours water into the font from the jars previously used in the consecration of the church, washes it, and wipes it dry, while the deacons sing Psalms 26:1, 8; 26:4; and 43:3-4. He takes the chrism and signs five crosses, on its four sides and base, saying, "We consecrate this font for the name of [Saint John the Baptist](#) in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit." A few psalms are then read, the font is covered, and the bishop says the benediction. Once again the people recite the Lord's Prayer, after which the bishop, clergy, and deacons return to the church to celebrate the liturgy.

A second, lengthier version is given in a copy of the Euchologion printed in [Rome](#) in 1762. It comprises the following sections:

1. seven psalms: 122, 127, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136

2. three [Old Testament](#) prophecies: Genesis 28:10-22; Isaiah 1:16- 27; [Ezekiel](#) 40:1-23
3. Psalm 117 and the Hymn of the Golden Censer
4. [Ephesians](#) 4:1-10 5. 1 Peter 3:13-22
5. Acts of the Apostles 19:1-10
6. the *Trisagion*
7. [Gospel intercession](#) and lection: Matthew 17:1-5; [John](#) 5:1-18
8. *Kyrie eleison* (ten times)
9. the Seven Great Intercessions: travelers, the sick, the ruler, the water (or plants, or fruit), the dormants, the oblations, and the catechumens
10. *Kyrie eleison* (a hundred times)
11. the Three Great Intercessions: peace, church fathers, and congregations.

Then follows the baptismal prayer and the subsequent sections as mentioned in the first version of the ceremony.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Horner, G. *The Service for the Consecration of a Church and Altar, According to the Coptic Rite*. London, 1902.

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